



DIPARTIMENTO DI PREVENZIONE

A.S.L. CE 2

Via Giotto – R.ne S. Agostino
S. Maria C.V.

☎ 0823/587519 - Fax 0823/810274

Guidelines for handling dead or dying water fowl around the Gricignano USNavy base

Background:

In Italy, since last year, a monitoring system was put in place, and is on-going, to **monitor intensive/industrial breeding (≥ 250 units per farm) and for rural breeding** of domestic flying animals in order to research the virus and/or sero-positivity to the H5 and H7 – called **ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM** – (random samples/feces samples and serum testing for a significant number of animals for each species).

The species under surveillance are the following:

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Game (quail, starling, pheasant)
- Ostrich
- Gander, duck
- Weaning animals

At the end of 2005, the census for all breeding farms of domestic-rural type held in Italy was completed, thus completing the already active census of all intensive/industrial type breeding.

Additionally, the Surveillance System foresees **monitoring to identify the flu-virus in wild game** (including water fowl, especially limicolous and wild duck) and of **susceptible species that remain in the areas at risk** (humid areas, migrating routes or areas at high concentration of chicken-breeding farms). Also in this case the surveillance foresees sampling of feces in order to identify the virus and perform sierological testing.

In regards to wild species, possible vectors of avian flu, the system provides for **PASSIVE SURVEILLANCE** which foresees alerting the **Local State Veterinary Service** by individual citizens or by the breeding-farmer to report death or abnormal symptomatology of the sensitive species - water fowl and wild game (ducks, swans, gander, limicolous, sea gulls, sea crows, mallard). In this case any single citizen or breeding-farmer can report to the local Operative Veterinary Unit that evaluates the type of report and may activate a sequential series of steps, summarized in the following list:

- telephone consultation to evaluate the alerted case by citizens
- on-site visit after having made sure by phone of the potentially harmful finding, removal of carcasses or dying animals and contemporary forwarding to the Zooprofilactic Institute for confirmation test
- alerting the medical services of Public Health after confirmation or in case of immediate suspicion (Operative Unit of Collective Prevention area office and the Epidemiology Service of the Prevention Department) to conduct epidemiological investigations and active surveillance of the exposed individuals

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Definition of “SUSPECT CASE” for alerting the Veterinary Services of the Local Health Authority

Finding of:

A. “1” recently dead or dying specimen, belonging to the “wild game” (free) species:

- ducks
- gander
- wans
- limicolous
- sea gulls
- sea crows
- mallard (wild duck)

B. 10 or more specimens dead or dying, of any type of wild and/or domestic flying species, not clearly attributable to other causes (domestic or wild species not included in the point “A” list)

Plan of Action

In case of finding of birds that comply with the definition of **suspicious case**:

- 1. do not touch the animal**
- 2. alert the Public Veterinary Service at the numbers reported (see Useful Numbers list, page 4) and**
- 3. specify exactly the location of the finding and own telephone number to facilitate identification of the area.**

The public veterinary, after telephone verification for compliance with the appropriate case definition (type of species involved – sensitive or refractory – type of event > # of animals involved and type of phenomenon - deaths or infection characterized by stiff neck (torticollis, paralysis and other neurological symptoms), reports on-site of the finding and removes, using biosafety tools and measures, the species involved and sends specimen to the cognizant regional Center for appropriate testing; contemporary activation of biosafety measures for the animal population as well as alerting the public health medical services to activate prevention and surveillance measures of the local population “at risk”.



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**Definition of “NON-SUSPECT CASE”
(do not alert the public Veterinary Service)**

Finding of a few dead birds belonging to species that have low-sensitivity to the infection (i.e. passeriforms):

- pigeons
- blackbird
- swallow
- dove
- robin
- canary, chaffinch, goldfinch
- starling, raven, predatory birds
- other small birds
- Old bird's carcasses in advanced decomposition level

Plan of Action

In case of findings of birds meeting the criteria for **non-suspect case**:

- 1. bury the carcass underground, following the normal hygiene rules**
- 2. if burial ground/soil is not available, alert the Public Veterinary service at the numbers reported (see Useful Numbers list, page 4) who, after certifying death, will guarantee proper disposal through a recognized Authorized Agency, with service fees sustained by the customer**



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Useful Numbers

Veterinary Unit of Aversa (CE)

- from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday-Saturday): **081 5001339**
- From 8 p.m to 8 a.m. Monday-Saturday and Sunday you can phone the Local Police (Carabinieri) of Aversa: **081 8902280** and ask to activate the Official Veterinary available

Experimental Zooprophyllaxis Institute of Southern Italy - Portici (NA)

- **Green line 800 017 811** (They talk about avian flu in general but can activate the local Official Veterinary for any case).
- The number is active from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Monday-Sunday) – They speak only Italian

Ministry of Health – Rome

- **Hot line** (telefono verde) 1500 (they provide general information about Avian-flu - only Italian language - although you may be able to find someone who speaks English since there are several young doctors manning the hotline).
- The number is active seven days/week

For more information:

Angelo D'Argenzio, MD

Epidemiology Unit

S. Maria C.V.

ASL Caserta 2

Tel 0823 587552 (Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

Gennaro Forgione, DVM

Veterinary Epidemiology Unit

S. Maria C.V.

ASL Caserta 2

Tel 0823 891560 (Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.)